MARY,

QUEEN OF SCOTS,

A

TRAGEDY;

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

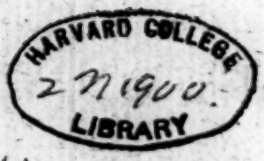
By the Honourable JOHN ST. JOHN.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR MESSRS. WILKINSON, GILBERT, WHITE, BYRNE, WOGAN, PERRIN, LEWIS, DORNIN, HALPEN, JONES, MOORE, AND GRUBBER.

M DCC.LXXXIX.

17474.14.253



Shapleigh fol

TO THE

Honourable Mrs. BOUVERIE.

MADAM,

ALLOW me ſo far to treſpaſs on that friendſhip, which has long been the honour and happineſs of my life, as to entreat your permiſſion to inſcribe to you this Tragedy. —Your compliance with this requeſt will be the more gratefully felt by me, from my knowledge of your diſinclination to attract the public attention towards thoſe many eminent qualities which you poſſeſs, and from a proper ſenſe of the inſignificance of my teſtimony to thoſe merits which are known and acknowledged by the unanimous ſuffrage of the moſt brilliant ſociety, and of the firſt characters in this country.—

Madam,

DEDICATION.

Madam, as your acceptance of this dedication may, in ſome degree, imply your approbation of the performance, I cannot truſt my pretenſions to your favourable opinion ſolely to motives of friendſhip, however diſtinguiſhed you are for that amiable quality; I have too high a reſpect for your taſte and judgment, not to aſſert my *claim* and *title* to your indulgence on this occaſion, which, in a great meaſure, owes its origin to yourſelf; as I ſhould neither have undertaken this attempt without your encouragement, or have offered it to the Theatre, where it has been honoured with ſo great an attendance, without your advice, in conjunction with that of many partial and indulgent friends.

MADAM,

I have the honour to be,
With the higheſt eſteem,
And moſt ſincere regard,
Your very obedient friend,
And moſt humble ſervant,
JOHN ST. JOHN.

Curzon Street,
April 30, 1789.

PROLOGUE.

Written by WILLIAM FAWKENER, Eſq;

And ſpoken by Mr. WROUGHTON.

OF modern, Tragic Bards how few are found
Who dare to truſt themſelves on open ground!
In Fiction's fortreſſes they love to lie,
To coin their flimſy tales, and vainly try
To move your paſſions by an idle ſhew
Of fancied ſorrows, and ideal woe:
To *Greece*, to *France*, to *Italy* they roam,
To lead you as they pleaſe, when far from home.
Our AUTHOR moves not from his native land;
Here in this LITTLE ISLE he takes his ſtand;
Convinc'd, of tragic, as of comic ſtore,
No other nation ever yielded more;
And FRIEND TO FREEDOM, he diſdains the rules
And narrow precepts of the *foreign ſchools*.
No labour'd ſtratagem theſe ſcenes preſent;
No ſudden change, or unprepar'd event;
With chaſter art he writes not to the eyes,
Nor wou'd he ſtoop to win you by ſurprize;
Yet hopes, with names familiar to your ears,
To raiſe your horror, or draw down your tears.
'Tis true ELIZABETH's victorious hand
From Spaniſh tyrants ſav'd the threaten'd land;
Wiſe were her Counſellors, her Warriors brave,
But ſhe was WOMAN ſtill, and Paſſions's ſlave.
Fam'd as ſhe was for policy and arms,
She vainly claim'd *pre-eminence of charms*;

See

See her with jealouſy now frantic grown,
Dread MARY's *ſmiles* far more than PHILIP's *frown*:
Is there amongſt you, who, with ſtedfaſt eye,
Can MARY's ſufferings view, nor heave one ſigh?
From kinder ſkies, and from luxurious courts,
From tilts and tournaments, and feaſts, and ſports,
She came to govern (oh, too hard a part!)
A barbarous nation, and a tender heart;
And fell a victim in that ſullen age,
To factious fury, and fanatic rage.
Oh! had ſhe liv'd in more enlighten'd times,
When graces were not ſins, nor talents crimes,
Admiring nations had confeſs'd her worth;
And SCOTLAND ſhone the ATHENS of the NORTH.
Too long hath virtue bluſh'd at MARY's name,
And juſtice ſlumber'd o'er her injur'd fame:
Truth to the heart at length ſhall force its way,
And reaſon juſtify the paſſions' ſway.

BRA-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Duke of Norfolk, - - -	Mr. Kemble.
Sir William Cecil, - - -	Mr. Aickin.
Lord Herries, - - - - -	Mr. Barrymore.
Davifon, - - - - - -	Mr. Packer.
Earl of Shrewſbury, - -	Mr. Benſon.
Earl of Huntingdon, - -	Mr. Phillimore.
Sir Amais Paulet, - - -	Mr. Fawcett.
Beton, - - - - - - -	Mr. Williames.
Nawe, - - - - - - -	Mr. Alfred.
Lieutenant of the Tower, -	Mr. Lyons.
Sheriff, - - - - - - -	Mr. Chaplin.

WOMEN.

Queen Mary, - - - - -	Mrs. Siddons.
Queen Elizabeth, - - - -	Mrs. Ward.
Lady Douglas, - - - - -	Mrs. Farmer.
Lady Scrope, - - - - -	Miſs Tidſwell.

MARY QUEEN of SCOTS.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Gateway of Bolton Caſtle.

Enter Beton, *who perceives Lord* Herries *arriving.*

BETON.

SURE 'tis Lord Herries! Oh, my noble friend!
How have we daily pray'd for your return!
Your royal miſtreſs, from yon turrets height,
By hourly watch, hath ſtrain'd her beauteous eyes,
Till guſhing tears o'erwhelm'd her ſight—But ſay,
What tidings bring you from the Engliſh Court?

LORD HERRIES.

Beton! if faith, and zeal in a good cauſe,
Cou'd have ſecur'd ſucceſs, it had been thine;
Your claim of ſimple audience for a Queen
Was founded on a royal pledge. The ring

Which grac'd your embaſſy, was ſent with vows
To Mary from Elizabeth, that ſhe wou'd aid
Her royal ſiſter's cauſe—But, oh, good Beton!
It needs not our experience to foreſee
The gulph 'twixt vows, and their accompliſhment.

BETON.

But the reſult?

LORD HERRIES.

Evaſions and chicane;
Baſe terms propos'd; then treacherous advice
That Mary ſhou'd in policy ſubmit
To this ſtrange trial; Heav'n forbid! until
She's heard in perſon.

BETON.

Still deny her preſence?
Still urge theſe poor pretences! Grant our Queen
Were liable to imputations—Grant
Whate'er hate envy liſt—'twill but enforce
Her claim to face th' accuſer.

LORD HERRIES.

I ſhall entreat
Permiſſion to revoke this raſh appeal.

BETON.

Wou'd it were done! Our country is debas'd!
While our anointed Queen ſubmits her cauſe
To foreign juriſdiction, and betrays
At once her own and Scotland's dignity.

LORD HERRIES.

Thus ſhall I urge; you know her ſpirit well;
Touch but that ſtring, 'twill vibrate o'er her frame;
She has a ſoul that wakes at honour's voice,
Alive, with eager trembling at the ſound,
She flies to its embrace; let ſhame approach;
Straight ſhe recoils, and ſhrinks within herſelf;

No

No plant ſo ſenſitive, no ſhade ſo fleet.
May Heav'n ſtill guard her! which way is the Queen?
[Exeunt.

SCENE II. *The Hall in* Bolton Caſtle.

Enter Lady Scrope, *meeting Lady* Douglas.

LADY SCROPE.

How fares my royal gueſt this morn, ſweet maid?
You meet me on my accuſtom'd daily courſe
To attend your Queen, and wait her high commands.

LADY DOUGLAS.

My gentle Lady Scrope, you are too kind;
Such courteous words but ill beſuit the ſtate
Of my poor fallen miſtreſs—Rather ſay,
Is ſhe ſecure? Who guards the caſtle gates?
Is ev'ry arrow-ſlit and loop-hole watch'd?

LADY SCROPE.

Tax me not, Douglas! with ſeverity—

LADY DOUGLAS.

'Tis but your duty, which you exerciſe
With tender feeling, and more true reſpect,
Than thoſe at firſt deputed to receive her
With all the forms and pomp of royal ſtate.
For, oh! what aggravating mockery!
Bows, ſmiles, and court-like phraſes never ſooth
The pangs of Princes in impriſonment.
But your high mind would ſcorn to pay baſe court
By acts of rigour on the wretched.

LADY SCROPE.

Yes!
I know too well the dues of ſovereignty:
While ſhe is with me, under the Lord Scrope's roof,
His wife, and Norfolk's ſiſter, ne'er ſhall hear
A Queen's complaints with cold indifference.

LADY DOUGLAS.

Oh, nobly ſpoken! worthy your great birth!
Oh! how your ſentiments and voice recall
Your brother's image! would he now were here
For my poor miſtreſs' ſake—But ſee ſhe comes.

Enter Mary.

LADY SCROPE.

May health and comfort to your Majeſty
Return, with this propitious morn!

MARY.

Alas!
My noble hoſteſs, your civility
Touches a grateful mind more pointedly;
Is more affecting; melts my ſpirits more
Than a leſs kind reception cou'd have done.
You owe not me this viſit; for I came
In ſtrict obedience to your Queen's high will,
Under a promiſe from her royal ſelf
That ſhe wou'd meet me ere I ſhou'd arrive;
But in her place, behold! ſhe ſends her guards
To do me honour—Oh, my faithful maid!
You've ſeen me travel with a prouder ſuite;
When all the gallant youth of France preſs'd on,
Led forward by the Princes of Lorrain,
Striving who foremoſt ſhou'd eſcort their Queen
From Paris to the ſea—The gorgeous train
Sweeping along the plains of Picardy,
Like ſome bright comet in its pathleſs courſe,
Illumin'd all the country as it paſs'd:
But what avail theſe thoughts? for other ſcenes
I muſt behold—Yet, truly, this fair ſeat
Might well befit a royal reſidence,
And ſuits my fancy—but that I perceive
Some features in it which awake my mind
To ſtrange miſgivings—Wherefore, Lady Scrope,
Do centinels ſurround the battlements?

LADY

LADY SCROPE.

Madam, be not alarm'd; and reſt aſſur'd
All comforts, honours, free acceſs of friends,
And every privilege that can aſſuage
Misfortune, ſhall be found within theſe walls.
Seek then no reſcue, nor attempt a flight.

MARY.

Flight! ſaid you, Lady Scrope? I muſt not fly?
Then there's no farther doubt—Ah, 'tis too plain!
I'm in confinement here! a priſoner!
Oh, horrid word!—Oh, monſtrous perfidy!
Oh, perjur'd, falſe Elizabeth! Is this
The faith of England? theſe the plighted vows
Of Queen to Queen? the bond of ſiſterhood?
And ſacred rights of hoſpitality?
If juſtice has not fled the earth and ſkies,
Requite it Heav'n! Oh, my kind keeper! now
No more my hoſteſs; you are merciful;
Your kind indulgence mitigates my lot;
Softens, and blunts the ſharp edge of that hour,
The painful but ſhort hour, that goes between
Th' impriſonment of Princes and their end:
You did aſſure me I ſhou'd ſee my friends;
Your brother Norfolk is my deareſt friend;
Shall I?———

Enter Herries.

LADY SCROPE.

———Here's one to put me to the proof—
Heaven knows the iſſue; we'll retire and pray
For peace, and concord, amity and love.

[*Exeunt Lady* S. *and Lady* D.

MARY.

Herries! my friend! companion of my flight!
Beſt counſellor who bade me ſhun this land,
What anſwer have you brought from this proud Queen?

LORD HERRIES.

This is the purport: England's Queen declares,
That as a friend, and not a judge, ſhe hears

This cauſe—Your reſtoration to atchieve,
If you renounce all title to her Crown,
During her life, and iſſue—Give up France;
Ally yourſelf with her; renounce the Maſs.

MARY.

Heav'ns, what a height of inſolence is this!
I ſee her aim; and now, no more, than this—
Will ſhe in perſon hear her ſiſter Queen?

LORD HERRIES.

She ſtill declines to ſee you, till you're clear'd
Of this foul charge; which ſhe herſelf abets,
Baſely ſuborning forgeries, mean time,
Full of profeſſions of ſincereſt love,
She waits impatient to embrace with joy
Her vindicated ſiſter—But till then,
Moſt ſanctimoniouſly abhors the ſight
Of one, whoſe honour ſhe herſelf betrays
By her falſe calumnies.

MARY.

Perfidious wretch!

LORD HERRIES.

Know you that Murray, your baſe brother, dwells
At England's Court, conſulted, cloſeted;
While you, a Queen, her equal in all points,
Are in vile durance—

MARY.

Grant me patience, Heaven!

LORD HERRIES.

Were he your equal, why this preference
To him who ſhou'd plead guilty, not accuſe?

MARY.

'Tis all mere mockery and artifice
To cheat the world, and gain its confidence
By ſemblance of fair juſtice.

LORD HERRIES.

Rather ſay
Plain, undiſguis'd injuſtice: might I ſpeak,
Your Majeſty ſhou'd vindicate your right,
As a ſupreme and independent Queen.

MARY.

And yet my truſty guide! Can I recede;
Decline the enquiry; ſcorn the public voice;
Leave the licentious world to its own thoughts,
And my fair fame, a prey to wild conjecture?

LORD HERRIES.

The world's more juſt than to expect a Queen,
To plead to vaſſals in a foreign land;
Hold up her hand and bend her knee to thoſe
Whoſe proudeſt head, at ſight of her approach,
Shou'd proſtrate fall, and humbly kiſs the duſt.

MARY.

And yet what other clearance can I have?
Shall I ſit down under this heavy load?
Shall conſcious innocence reject the means
Of wiping off this ſtain? No! I'll reſign
All, but the firſt of titles, a fair name.

LORD HERRIES.

'Tis not yourſelf, but Scotland you betray;
Rights of a Sovereign realm, tranſmitted thro'
A hundred Kings; rights which yourſelf were born,
And which you've ſword to uphold.

MARY.

Truth will prevail;
Herries! you may return to England's Queen:
Tell her I here recall my late appeal,
As all beneath my name and dignity.
Tell her I came invited to this land
By her fair words, and ſought a refuge here;
That refuge is a priſon—then repeat
My wiſh in perſon to ſubmit my cauſe;
(Wherein I ſhew her honour and reſpect
Exceeding all example) If, at laſt,
This woman, ſo forgetful of herſelf,
Deaf to the claims of blood and royalty,
Againſt a ſiſter ſhall make faſt the door,
Admitting her accuſer: let her know,
The Queen of Scotland claims her liberty;

Demands

Demands her birthright; nor will e'er reſign
That freedom Heav'n and nature gave to all.
If this juſt ſuit's denied; defy her then;
Challenge her worſt: dare her to keep me here;
Bid her unhinge, and ſet at nought the laws
Of nature and of nations; let her pride
Exult in barbarous diſregard of right,
And emulate th' unlettered Turk and Moor,
Till in one common cauſe, and with one voice,
All Chriſtendom ſhall riſe to reſcue me.

[*Exit* Herries.

Enter Norfolk.

NORFOLK.

Pardon this bold intruſion of your ſlave,
Whoſe ſteps are guided by reſiſtleſs charms,
And every ſentiment that pureſt love
Breathes in the hearts of her true votaries.

MARY.

Are you then come, brave, generous man! My joy,
Norfolk! at ſight of thee, diſpels my fears:
Yet were it known you ſought my preſence here—

NORFOLK.

Is it then treaſon to approach theſe walls?
Muſt I preſume your guilt, who, thro' this veil,
See your bright innocence?

MARY.

Heav'n knows 'tis ſuch;
But circumvented thus by perjuries,
By bold bad men, what can a woman hope,
A helpleſs, unbefriended exile?

NORFOLK.

Oh!
Can'ſt thou pronounce thoſe words and look on me?

MARY.

No! thou didſt guard me from th' impending wrath
Of Murray, that inhuman enemy.
Oh, thou haſt laviſhed unrequited aid

Moſt

Moſt Angel like—Now firſt I feel my loſs;
The fall of power ne'er wounds the breaſt ſo deep,
As when, from hearts that ſwell with gratitude,
It ſevers all the means of recompenſe.

NORFOLK.

What do I hear? No means of recompenſe?
Why what reward can Heav'n? a beauteous Queen,
The paragon and envy of her ſex,
The wonder and delight of all mankind;
Sent from the ſkies to dazzle all below
With rays too bright for mortal ſight to bear.

MARY.

Terms ſuch as theſe apply not to a wretch,
A poor, unfortunate, degraded wretch,
Doom'd to captivity.

NORFOLK.

Captivity!
It cannot, muſt not, ſhall not be; ſuch acts
Are not within the reach of envy's graſp.
Cold-blooded tyrants may conceive ſuch thoughts;
But, truſt me, mankind is not yet ſo loſt
To honour, decency, and gen'rous love;
The manners of the age, the face of things,
Wou'd not endure to ſee the pride of the age,
And all the living beauty of the world,
Led like a ſacrifice to night and hell,
And buried quick—nay, in the bloom of youth;
And ſuch a bloom as blaſts the budding roſe
Of England's maids ſo fam'd—a form that mars
All other claim to grace or dignity.

MARY.

You mock me, ſure!—Alas, what wou'd theſe flights?

NORFOLK.

Yourſelf, and this fair hand; here on this earth
I aſk, in one raſh prayer, all Heav'n can grant.
[*Kneeling.*

MARY.

Let not deſpair, or confidence, take place;
Where fickle fortune reigns———

NORFOLK.

NORFOLK.

Oh, joyful words!
I am not to deſpair; hence, hence I date
All joys of life, and flatt'ring hopes to come,
And dedicate all honour, ſervice, love,
Henceforth unto the miſtreſs of my ſoul.

MARY.

Another miſtreſs claims thy ſervices,
A proud, inquiſitive, revengeful Queen;
One full of envy; doom'd thro' life to feed
On gall, and ſpleen; nor taſte love's generous draught;
Watchful ſhe is, and jealous in the extreme;
Beware how ſhe's inform'd!

NORFOLK.

Why ſhou'd we fear?
Her miniſters approve; proud Leiceſter's ſelf,
Her favourite, will procure her full conſent.

MARY.

Great minds are unſuſpicious to their ruin;
Truſt not to Leiceſter's words—Nor dream that ſhe
Will looſe theſe chains, and faſten Hymen's bands
For one ſhe hates, fears, views with envious eyes.
Will ſhe, ſo wiſe, join me to all your power?
It cannot be; prepare then for the worſt;
And, if we fail, and I remain a ſlave,
Perhaps in faſter chains, they ſhall but add
Freſh rivets to our love—This token keep!
[*Delivering a token.*
If cloſer walls await me, this may ſerve
To inſtruct ſome faithful ſervant of your name,
And of my wiſh for your acceſs—Adieu!

NORFOLK.

Farewell, thou pattern of all excellence!
[*Exit* Norfolk.

MARY *ſola.*

Now, Heav'ns! as you regard our mortal cares,
If innocence claims mercy in your ſight,
Expand your guardian wings, and cover me
From this black ſtorm! avert the dire approach

Of

Of this too-ſubtil ſerpent's crooked pace
That glides to my deſtruction! How have I
Deſerved her venom? Is it that I am young?
Born to one Crown, and married to another?
Or that, in me, ſhe ſees with jaundic'd eyes
Her lineal ſucceſſor? Aye! there's the crime
Meanneſs cannot forgive—Poor narrow ſoul!
That wanting courage to ſubmit to fate,
Seeks, like her father, to perpetuate
A mortal throne, and reign when ſhe's no more:
There's no diſtemper ſo incurable
As thirſt of power—Here then for life I'm fix'd,
Unleſs I work my way thro' walls of ſtone;
Alas, theſe hands are weak! But I'll find ſome
Shall tear up by the roots theſe thick-ribb'd towers;
I'll from my dungeon ſcream, till to my cries
All Eurpoe echoes—Norfolk! thou ſhalt rouze
That inſuppreſſive ſpirit of this iſle,
Which hates injuſtice, ſuccours innocence,
Appals the tyrant, and protects the oppreſs'd.

ACT II.

SCENE I. WHITEHALL.

Elizabeth *ſeated on her Throne, attended by her Court and Guards.*

Enter Cecil.

ELIZABETH.

CECIL, your haſte tells me you bring advice
Of the reſult of this day's conference
On Mary's cauſe.—

CECIL.

My liege, the conference
By Norfolk, your own delegate, this hour
Is ſuddenly diſſolved.—The partial Duke,
When Herries claim'd an audience for his Queen,
Diſmiſs'd the Court, and juſtified the claim.

ELIZABETH.

Mary will never be in want of friends
While Norfolk lives.——

CECIL.

And how long that may be,
I know not; but can never wiſh long life
To England's foes.——

ELIZABETH.

Of Norfolk ſay you that?

CECIL.

Not as a charge direct, of any crime
Within the graſp of law: but when a Duke
So highly honour'd by his Queen, ſhall plot
In ſtate affairs—

ELIZABETH.

What mean theſe hints? Explain.

[*Deſcending from her Throne.*

CECIL.

CECIL.

The Duke arrives from Bolton, the Lord Scrope's.

ELIZABETH.

Indeed! I own the viſit was ill tim'd.

CECIL.

Or flow'd it purely from fraternal love?

ELIZABETH.

Why, Cecil, you delight in dark ſurmiſe!
Norfolk's an open undeſigning man;
His friendſhips and diſlikes are all avow'd.

CECIL.

Soft clay takes deep impreſſion—Flexible
To any ſhape, is moulded eaſily;
And facil, honeſt minds, when caught by love,
Exchange their native qualities for thoſe
Which ſuit their new deſigns.—

ELIZABETH.

Speak you of love?

CECIL.

Aye, mutual, in all its forms declar'd;
Cloſe correſpondence.—

ELIZABETH.

Oh, accurſed news!
Oh, all-ſeducing harlot!—Wanton wretch!
Can none eſcape the faſcinating looks
Of this attracting baſiliſk? muſt ſhe——
Cecil! this inſtant iſſue my commands
For cloſer cuſtody; ſeek Shrewſbury;
Tell him to take her from the Lady Scrope,
Her Norfolk's ſiſter, and from Bolton, ſtraight
Proceed to Tutbury's ſtrong fortreſs: there
Let her be guarded ſafe—begone—no ſtop—
Cecil, be ſure, you do not trifle here.
I would not have your wary character
Blemiſh'd, by joining in the babling cry
Of every politic officious knave,
Seeking reward for premature reports:—
What proof have you of this?

CECIL.

Ere long compleat;
Till then my faithful word; but let not haſte
Mar the diſcovery—Plots there are beſides
Of blacker die, not flowing from the Duke,
But from the reſtleſs ſpirit of the church,
Whoſe midnight conclave brooding in the dark,
Deviſes ſtratagems and maſſacres
For thoſe who break her fetters.—

ELIZABETH.

Now diſpatch,
Uſe all your zeal—forget not Shrewſbury.

[*Exit* Cecil.

[*Sola.*] The events begin to multiply, which tend
All to my point—This cloſe impriſonment
Will now be ſanctified in peoples eyes.
I'll ſpread the fame of this conſpiracy;
But for the Duke's intrigue there needs no haſte;
As yet 'tis in the bud, and may lie hid
Till farther light ſhall ripen and expand
Its native colours.—Here he comes at length.

Enter Norfolk.

NORFOLK.

I fear I'm come full late; tho' not the laſt
In love and duty to my gracious Queen.

ELIZABETH.

My Lord, we know your fame for loyalty;
For honour, juſtice, generoſity;
We think ourſelves have not been wanting yet,
In owning and rewarding your deſerts;
Nor can we doubt your faith and gratitude.

NORFOLK.

Forbid it Heaven that there ſhould be juſt cauſe!

ELIZABETH.

Norfolk, you are our firſt commiſſioner.—

NORFOLK.

As ſuch, I truſt I've not diſgrac'd my charge,
Or England's juſtice.—

ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH.

You are not accus'd;
Think not we wiſh for blind ſubſerviency
In th' exerciſe of ſuch a truſt; but ſay
Frankly, what colour wears this wondrous cauſe?

NORFOLK.

On Mary's ſide fair as her beauteous front.—

ELIZABETH.

How! to my face? [*aſide.*
My Lord, you never ſpeak
But from the heart; ſuch ſtankneſs pleaſes me,
And much becomes your family and name;
Which, in good truth, I wiſh were well ſecur'd
In the right line; your noble wife, my Lord,
Hath lately left us to lament her loſs;
You ſhou'd repair it: who wou'd not be proud
To boaſt of Norfolk's heart? Why not aſpire
To aſk a royal hand?—The Queen of Scots
Is not, I gueſs, diſpleaſing in your ſight.

NORFOLK.

Aſpire to gain the Queen of Scots? ſhall I,
So highly countenanced by your good grace,
Court one in bondage, fallen, and accus'd?

ELIZABETH.

Is, then, a diadem ſo ſmall a prize?

NORFOLK.

Pardon me, Madam, if I have no wiſh
To wed a priſoner.—Gods, when I reflect
On all the comforts I enjoy at home,
How can I wiſh to ſeek a land of ſtrife;
And purchaſe, at the price of wealth and eaſe,
A barren ſceptre and a fruitleſs crown?

ELIZABETH.

Then England boaſts a peer who ſcorns the match?

NORFOLK.

Such are the gifts of bounteous Providence,
Such my condition in my native land,
That when ſurrounded by the numerous throng
Of my retainers, at my plenteous board,

Or in the crouded field at country ſports,
I, your liege ſubject, ſometimes rate myſelf
As high as many princes.—

Enter Daviſon.

DAVISON.

Madam, I come
From the Earl of Leiceſter, who by illneſs ſeiz'd
Deſpairs of life, yet frequently repeats
Your royal name, and ſeems as if he wiſh'd
T' impart ſome weighty matter.—

ELIZABETH.

Say I'll come. [*Exit* Dav.
[*Aſide*.] So Leiceſter has ſome ſecret to divulge
Upon his death bed, tho' I truſt to Heav'n
He doth not yet upon his death bed lie!—
[*Addreſſed to* Norfolk.] And on what pillow Norfolk lays his head,
Let him beware!— [*Exit* Eliz.

NORFOLK, *ſolus*.

What may this caution mean?
Beware what pillow! Ha! why more is meant:
I mark'd her cold, dry looks, her pregnant ſneers;
All is not well—ſurely ſhe has not heard—
She has, and I'm undone—all confidence,
All faith is rotten—Leiceſter is my friend;
But who knows what in ſickneſs he'll confeſs?
Somehow I am betray'd: 'Tis Cecil ſure;
The prying, penetrating Cecil, aye!
He at a glance views all this buſy world,
And reads our very hearts. I'll to him ſtraight.
[*Exit* Norfolk.

SCENE II. *Enter* Cecil, *meeting* Lord Herries *in haſte*.

CECIL.

Whither ſo faſt, my Lord?

HERRIES.

No matter, Sir,
If far from regions whence all faith is flown,
All reverence to royal rights—

CECIL.

CECIL.

How's this?

HERRIES.

England's no more a civiliz'd eſtate:
The ſavage Afric tyrant may expoſe
His ſubject's liberty to public ſale,
Seize, bind, and ſell the human race like beaſts,
Mow down their heads like thiſtles in the path;
He is untutor'd; yet no more than you,
Barbarian, reckleſs of all faith and law.

CECIL.

What breach of law? what wrongful judgment's this?

HERRIES.

None: for you cannot, dare not judge our Queen.
Why is ſhe then detain'd? Curſe on this land
'And all its ſavage race, your curſed ſhores,
'Plac'd like a trap to intercept the courſe
'And paſſage of the ſea, had well nigh caught
'My Miſtreſs on her way:' Henceforth what ſail
Will not, thro' rocks and ſands, avoid your coaſt;
Soon as the mariner ſhall from afar
Deſcry your hated cliffs, tho' ſpent with toil,
Conſum'd with ſickneſs, and diſtreſs'd for food,
He'll turn his leaky veſſel, and eſcape
The ſeat of treacherous Circe's cruel reign.
Yet, ere I go, mark this, the hour's at hand
When foreign vengeance ſhall diſmay your iſle,
Scare all its coaſts, and make its center ſhake
At ſight of ſuch a buoyant armament,
As never preſs'd the boſom of the main.
Beware! [*Exit* Herries.

CECIL, *ſolus.*

Aye; and in ſpite of thee, proud Scot!
Let Scotland, France, and Spain blow up the ſtorm,
I'll weather it, if no ſiniſter wind,
No inland guſt, o'erſet me ſuddenly:
Mary's ſecure; and Norfolk's ſhallow brains
Are wrapt in dreams of vanity and love;
His plots I find have yet no farther ſcope.

[*Exit* Cecil.

SCENE III. Elizabeth *entering her Chamber with the* Lieutenant *of the* Tower.

ELIZABETH.

Lieutenant, now you've had your orders, haſte!

LIEUTENANT.

The Duke is ſtill below—I'll guard him well.

[*Exit* Lieut.

ELIZABETH, *ſola.*

So! this deſign is riper than I thought:
Leiceſter informs me that the contract's ſign'd.
The tower is now the fitteſt reſidence
For this intriguing Lord, who thinks to mix
The ſtateſman's and the lover's part unſeen.

Enter Cecil, *throwing himſelf at* Elizabeth's *Feet.*

CECIL.

Moſt gracious Queen! thus at your royal feet
I crave a boon. E'en as I enter'd now,
The Duke was ſeiz'd; oh, yet ſuſpend your wrath!

ELIZABETH.

Can Cecil plead for Norfolk? Riſe! and ſay,
What means this double aſpect? this quick change?
This aguiſh heat and cold? Your ſteady mind,
Which us'd to point the ſafeſt road, now veers,
Turns, like the ſhifting vane, at every blaſt.

CECIL.

When have theſe eyes e'er view'd your enemies
But with an even, ſtedfaſt look of hate?

ELIZABETH.

Why, Cecil! are not all the Catholics
United in this cauſe? th' ambaſſadors
Of France and Spain haunt me from morn to night
With their petitions for this captive Queen.

CECIL.

Yet Norfolk's neither Catholic nor foe;
Vouchſafe to hear him!——

ELIZABETH.

Since you are ſo prompt
In his defence;—who waits? [*Enter Attendant.*
Call in the Duke. [*Exit Attendant.*

CECIL.

CECIL.

Had he deſigns againſt your government
I ne'er had ſued for him; but he, poor dupe!
Intent on his vain-glorious enterpriſe,
Aim'd at no farther harm: and to be plain,
He is ſo popular, that 'tis not ſafe
To keep his perſon long in cuſtody—
But here he comes.——

Enter Norfolk, *throwing himſelf at* Elizabeth's *Feet.*

NORFOLK.

My Miſtreſs! Oh, my Queen!
Here let me, proſtrate on this ground, aſſert
My faith and loyalty!

ELIZABETH.

You may ariſe;
'Tis done already: honeſt Cecil prov'd
Your plots were not deſign'd againſt ourſelves.

NORFOLK.

Tho' juſtice is of right, yet he who feels
Not thankful for't, betrays a narrow mind,
Forgets the general pravity of man,
Nor prizes virtues for their rarity.

ELIZABETH.

Norfolk, attend! this caution now remains;
What falls from high ſhould deep impreſſion make;
Beware how you take part in Mary's cauſe!
Remember this forgiveneſs, and engage,
That henceforth you'll give over theſe attempts.

NORFOLK.

This act of juſtice claims my ſolemn vow.

ELIZABETH.

Cecil, attend us— [*Exit* Eliz.

CECIL.

Norfolk, this eſcape
Should ſerve to warn you from this idle chace;
Now ſeek ſome other fair—take her to wife;
Fly not at game ſo high; the faulcon's ſafe
Who for the leſſer quarry ſcuds the plain,

But

But if he's ſtruck, tow'ring to chaſe the hern,
He falls to riſe no more— [*Exit* Cecil.

NORFOLK, *ſolus.*

So! this wiſe man
Thus condeſcends to waſte his thoughts on me!
Advice is eaſier given than purſued.—
It is no trifling taſk to quit at once
All that makes life engaging, all I love!—
What have I promis'd? Heavens, I dread to think!
Yet it muſt be! for when did Norfolk e'er
Infringe his word? Nay, to his Queen, his kind
Indulgent Miſtreſs—What! for mercy ſue,
And break the fair conditions of the grant?
The very thought's a crime—Nature may change;
All creatures may their elements forſake;
The univerſe diſſolve and burſt its bonds;
Time may engender contrarieties,
And bring forth miracles—but none like this,
That I ſhould break my word—I'll to my love,
Lament our fate, and take my laſt farewell.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Before* Tutbury Caſtle.

Enter the Earl of Shrewſbury *and* Beton.

BETON.

I AM charg'd with royal thanks to Shrewſbury
For his humanity and gentleneſs.

SHREWSBURY.

Alas, good Beton! 'tis a grievous taſk
Thus to confine a Queen—Humanity,
Where 'tis ſo due, claims leſs acknowledgment.
I am enjoin'd to keep her cloſe, becauſe
The neighbourhood abounds with Catholics.
I was in ſearch of Bagot, the High Sheriff,
With orders on that point—

BETON.

I learn from him
That the Earl of Huntingdon will ſoon arrive;
I fear his ſurly, proud, imperious mind
Will bring no comfort to my Miſtreſs here.

SHREWSBURY.

You know he claims ſucceſſion to the Crown
Before the Queen of Scots; this ſtrange conceit
May ſwell his native pride and violence
With envious malice—but I'll temper it
By all the indulgences and gentle means
Our rigid orders ſuffer—Now farewell.

SCENE II. Tutbury Caſtle, Mary's *Chamber* —Mary *and Lady* Douglas *diſcovered.*

MARY.

No, not another tear! our fate's decreed;
Our lot is caſt; here in this ſad abode,
E'en here we may enjoy a dread repoſe—
Better by far than the tumultuous throbbs

Of

Of my poor aching heart, while yet it dreamt
Of liberty and viſionary crowns,
Whene'er I ſlumber'd, mock'd my troubled ſight,
Here then, at laſt, in theſe dark, ſilent dens,
We ſhall be proof againſt anxiety,
And ſeverous expectation's agonies.

LADY DOUGLAS.

My royal Miſtreſs, ſtill there is hope, though this
May ſeem the manſion of deſpair; ſo cold,
So comfortleſs, and fit for ſcenes of woe;
Such deep, low, winding vaults; ſuch towers aloft
Impending o'er their baſe, like broken cliffs
Whoſe ſhapeleſs, weather-beaten ſummits hang
In rude excreſcence, threat'ning inſtant fall:
Perhaps, in each of them, ſome wretch pent up,
Lives here, ſuſpended between heaven and earth—

MARY.

I like theſe diſmal cells; this awful gloom
Congenial to my ſoul—each yawning cave
Looks like the entrance to the ſhades of death,
And promiſes oblivion of this world.
Rude as this caſtle is, here held his ſtate
Old John of Gaunt; hither flock'd all the pride
Of chivalry; around the liſts ſat all
The beauties of the Court; each Knight in arms,
Intent to catch a glance from ſome bright eye,
Exulting in her champion's victory:
Our eyes are now to other uſes doom'd;
To read and weep by turns—Alas, my dear!
Your pretty eyes are far too young and bright
To waſte their luſtre on theſe ſights of woe.

LADY DOUGLAS.

Loſe not a thought on me! while I behold
My royal Miſtreſs's face, my heart's at reſt:
Not all the gaieties and bravery
Which once you ſay theſe walls were witneſs to,
Have charms for me; 'tis all I aſk, to ſit
Long, wintry, ſleepleſs nights, and chear awhile
The heavy hours that hang around your head.—

MARY.

MARY.

Heavens! how have I deſerv'd ſuch kindneſs? No!
This muſt not be; you muſt depart, my girl;
Fly quickly, ſhun this ſeat of wretchedneſs;
For elſe, who knows but you may be involv'd
In that ſad fate which hourly threatens me?
Oh! 'tis a ſorry ſight to ſee thee ſit
At meals with me, who never can enſure
One morſel at our ſcanty board, from fear
Of deadly poiſon: fly ere 'tis too late;
The prelude of impriſonment is ſhort;
Soon, very ſoon, we muſt expect to hear
Th' aſſaſſins wary ſtep, fix'd on his point,
Yet trembling ſtill with horror and remorſe,
And faultering in the deed —— Ah! who comes here?

Enter Shrewſbury.

SHREWSBURY.

Madam! it grieves me that my preſence here
Shou'd give you ſuch alarm; I hoped, that if
In any point that varied from my truſt,
'Twas not in cruelty—

MARY.

Oh, no, my lord!
Far otherwiſe; 'twas ſomewhat elſe, indeed;
Perhaps an idle fear; at leaſt while you
Continue in your charge—

SHREWSBURY.

If I remain—

MARY.

Why there's no doubt, I hope?—

SHREWSBURY.

None: but report
Now adds the name of Huntingdon—

MARY.

Alas!
Why is that monſter ſent? Are there no racks
Or torturing engines made to plague mankind?
No! I defy all art to find a tool
So fit for her ingenious cruelty;

The

The ſharpeſt inſtruments which tyrants uſe
Can ne'er impart ſuch pain, as the blunt edge
Of that unpoliſh'd fool's impertinence.

SHREWSBURY.

I ſhall not fail to enforce all due reſpect.

MARY.

'Tis vain to preach civility to brutes.
Theſe tidings quite oppreſs my ſinking ſoul.
Now I've no comfort left; my Douglas! now
You and I ſhall no longer ſit all day,
Conſoling one another's miſeries,
Telling old ſtories to beguile the time,
Of things that paſs'd, when I was queen, and you
The brighteſt jewel in my Court.

LADY DOUGLAS.

Indeed
We have a kind of melancholy joy
Indulging in our grief.

SHREWSBURY.

For that, alas!
I bring freſh food.———

MARY.

How ſo?

SHREWSBURY.

This hour I learn
A ſtrange account of ſome conſpiracy
Detected at Whitehall; wherein your name
Was join'd with Norfolk's, who, with other Lords,
Stands now committed to the Tower.

MARY.

Ha, me!
Merciful Heav'n! What ſay'ſt thou, Shrewſbury?
Is Norfolk in the Tower on my account?
Recal thoſe words! Oh, they ſhot thro' my brain
Like lightning! Say you do not believe them, man!
Speak, prythee! Oh, you heſitate! I'm loſt!
He's gone! I ſee the cruel lioneſs
Has ſeiz'd the noble hart; he bleeds beneath
Her horrid fangs. [*Leaning on Lady* Douglas.

LADY DOUGLAS.

Alas! her memory fails;
Excuſe this tranſient weakneſs, Sir, in one
So cruelly oppreſs'd, and made the ſport
Of croſs and wayward fortune.

SHREWSBURY.

Why this haſte?

Enter Nawe *haſtily.*

NAWE.

This moment brings a meſſenger, who tells
That Norfolk, Pembroke, Lumley, Arundel,
Each to his ſeveral dungeon was confined
For Norfolk's treaſon; that, on farther proof,
The Duke was clear'd; who now, reſtored to grace,
Lives in full ſplendour, fame, and liberty.

SHREWSBURY.

Look to the Queen! She faints.

[*Here* Mary *having changed from horror to joy, faints and falls into Lady* Douglas's *arms.*

LADY DOUGLAS.

Help! help!

SHREWSBURY.

Who waits?

Enter Mary's *attendants.*

Convey her ſoftly: Thus, alas! ſhe's dead.

[*They carry her to a couch.*

LADY DOUGLAS.

My Miſtreſs! Oh my Miſtreſs! Oh my Queen!
She breathes! ſhe breathes! yet there is life, oh, Heav'ns!

SHREWSBURY.

Patience awhile!

LADY DOUGLAS.

Be ſilent all I pray!
Her troubled ſpirit muſt not be diſturb'd;
Theſe ſhocks have ſtop'd the current of her blood;
And nature ſeeks a momentary pauſe:
Exceſſive joy ſucceeding grief ſo quick

Now overwhelms her mind; but balmy ſleep,
With tears that make the drowning tide to ebb,
Will eaſe the load that weighs upon her heart.

SHREWSBURY.

Give her repoſe awhile, and watch her well.

[*Exeunt, leaving* Mary *aſleep ſurrounded by* Lady Douglas *and her maids.*

SCENE III. *Before* Tutbury Caſtle.

Enter Beton *and* Nawe.

NAWE.

I truſt the Queen will ſoon regain her ſtrength.

BETON.

No doubt if this were all; but ſtill I fear
Farther viciſſitudes—The crazy times
Are big with ſtrange events; each teeming hour
Is fruitful of new miſchief—Who goes there?

Enter Norfolk *in diſguiſe.*

NORFOLK.

One born to freedom, and not bound to tell—
Whither he comes or goes———

NAWE.

What wou'd you here?

BETON.

Let's take him to the Governor———

NORFOLK.

Villains,
Stand off———

BETON.

No villains ſerve the Queen of Scots;
Learn that, baſe ruffian———

[*They draw their ſwords and ſeize* Norfolk.

NORFOLK.

Hold, are you the Queen's?
Serve your Queen Mary? then a word with you:
Know you this ſignet?

NAWE.

Ha! the token ſure!

BETON.

BETON.

The very token! 'tis the Duke!

NORFOLK.

My friends!

BETON.

No more; this is a dangerous place; retire
Below the drawbridge, to that ſally-port,
Half choak'd with ruins; there wait patiently,
Till we can execute the Queen's commands. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. Mary *diſcovered on her Couch, ſurrounded by Lady* Douglas *and her Maids.*

MARY.

Am I awake? Methinks the clouds diſperſe;
A watry gleam of light breaks thro' the miſt;
"The tepid ſunbeams play, and 'gin to ſhed
"Their all enlight'ning vivifying rays,"
To chear the world, and diſſipate its gloom;
All nature ſeems reſtored—"My gentle maids,
"Have you been with me whilſt I ſlept? No doubt;
"For I have dreamt I was in Heav'n; and you
"Were ſurely the fair angels that I ſaw
"Surrounding me in bliſs"—Douglas! I think
The laſt word I heard was liberty:
Norfolk is ſet at liberty?

LADY DOUGLAS.

No doubt;
That was the purport of our joyful news.

MARY.

Then I'm alive again, my hopes and all;
Once more I'll dream of comfort, and indulge
Each fond deluſion,—I ſhall ſee my love;
He'll ſoon be here;—Norfolk wo'nt tarry long.

Shrewſbury *and* Huntingdon *entering.*

SHREWSBURY.

Gently, my Lord! perhaps the Queen's at reſt.

HUNTINGDON.

We muſt uſe all diſpatch.

SHREWSBURY.

Awhile! my Lord!——
Madam! the Earl of Huntingdon, who is joined
In truſt with me——

[*Preſenting Lord* Huntingdon *to the* Queen.

MARY.

[*Aſide.*] Alas! are theſe my dreams
Of joy and comfort? My Lords, I ſtill rely
On your humanity and gentleneſs.

HUNTINGDON.

Our firſt inſtruction is to hold her ſafe.

[*Turning to* Shrewſbury.

SHREWSBURY.

Aye, but in that beware how we tranſgreſs
The bounds of mercy; mercy is the due
Of all who breathe on England's ſoil; it grows
From the ſame root, and is entwined around
The ſceptre of our Queen; we are to her
Subjects and Servants.

MARY.

I am neither, Lords!
I am, like her, a Queen; nor will conſent
To take as mercy, what I claim as right,
Juſtice and liberty.

HUNTINGDON.

This is no time
For ſuch high ſtrains; learn your condition here.

MARY.

Is this a language ſuited to your birth?

HUNTINGDON.

High birth is ne'er diſgrac'd by truth, I hope;
And for my tongue, 'twere better fail in that,
Than uſe my hands to perpetrate ſuch deeds
As Queens have ſometimes done.

SHREWSBURY.

Oh! ſhame; ſuch words,
If they were true——

HUN-

HUNTINGDON.

Talk not of words! I come
To execute my orders—Firſt, 'tis ſaid,
This caſtle, till of late, was us'd to hold
The county priſoners.

LADY DOUGLAS.

How! wou'd you place a Queen—
A lady form'd in nature's faireſt mould,
Rear'd like the tendereſt plant, ſhaped by each grace,
Each exquiſite laſt touch of poliſh'd art,
Among a tribe of felons?

SHREWSBURY.

What! immur'd
With all the refuſe of the human race,
The outcaſts of the earth?

HUNTINGDON.

My Lord! I know
My duty; ſure you have forgot the charge.
Who are all theſe that make the priſon ſhew
More like a royal court?

[*Pointing at* Mary's *attendants.*

MARY.

Mean, abject ſlave!

HUNTINGDON.

I here diſmiſs one half of this ſame train:
Begone! [*To the attendants.*]

MARY.

No, ſtop! inhuman wretch, forbear!
On me direct your vengeance—let not theſe
Poor helpleſs maids be driven from their home,
Tho' 'tis a poor diſconſolate abode:
For ſtill they wait with pleaſure on their Queen,
Proud to participate in all her woes:
But theſe are ſentiments thou can'ſt not feel.
Go, aſk your miſtreſs, whether ſuch a train
Is all too proud to attend upon the Crowns
Of France and Scotland? aſk what retinue
I ſhou'd have deem'd becoming her eſtate
With me, at Paris, or at Holyrood?

HUNTINGDON.

Thoſe days are paſt—without more idle words,
There's one condition, and but one, by which
You may be nobly entertain'd, and have
All freedom and reſpect—Give up your Crown;
Confirm Earl Murray Regent; and reſide
In England with your Son——

MARY.

No more! perform
The part that ſuits thee, jailor!—Thou lack'ſt wit
To tempt me to reſign my native Crown;
To ſacrifice at once myſelf, and ſon;
And, make the world believe I own her charge.
No! I prefer her dungeons—Death itſelf.

HUNTINGDON.

Then be it ſo! Attendants, follow me;
Leave her to ruminate in ſolitude.

[*Exit* Shrewſbury *and* Huntingdon, *with the attendants following reluctantly.*

MARY *ſola.*

Give up my Crown; my ſon; ſupport my foe,
My mortal, baſe, unnatural enemy.
'Tis a plain challenge to a Queen—Reſign
All ſenſe of honour, claims of birth, all thoughts
Of eminence in early youth imbib'd,
And grown habitual, to thoſe whom chance
Has in deriſion deck'd with mortal crowns;
Or elſe prepare, and ſummon fortitude
To brave the threats of power, the taunts, the ſcorn,
The worſt indignities that envy breeds;
That bittereſt produce of the meaneſt plant
That grows in mortal breaſts—Perhaps ſtill more;'
Perhaps her iron hand may rend theſe limbs;
This cruel wretch, this Huntingdon, is ſent
To ſit, preſide, direct the torturer's knife,
Glutting his greedy ſoul with ſcenes of blood,
While dying ſhrieks are muſic to his ears.
'Tis hard for female ſpirits to bear up,
And ſtand the fiery trial—Ah! who's that?
Spare me!

Enter

Enter Norfolk *in diſguiſe.*

NORFOLK.

Oh, fear me not, my life! 'tis I;
'Tis Norfolk at your feet.

MARY.

Oh, Heavens! once more
Save my poor intellects! Oh, Norfolk, oh!
My guardian angel! How ſhall I relate
All that befel me ſince? Yet rather ſay
How have you 'ſcap'd the jaws of that fell tygreſs?
How got you hither?

NORFOLK.

By the gift you gave;
Your token known, they ſtraight conducted me,
By ſecret ways, thro' theſe old walls, and thus
Theſe eyes at once are dazzled with a ſight
Dangerous to look on———

MARY.

Danger is no more
When my brave Norfolk's come; we'll talk of love,
Of future bliſs, and paint gay ſcenes of joy,
Counting our happy days before their time.

NORFOLK.

Alas! that's all, I fear, we e'er can hope.

MARY.

Let not your noble ſpirit, Norfolk, fail!

NORFOLK.

Spirit will fail when reaſon cannot hope.

MARY.

Norfolk cannot deſpond in Mary's cauſe.

NORFOLK.

Oh, think no more of ſuch a worthleſs wretch;
A baſe, mean villain, traitor to my Queen.

MARY.

Is love for me ſuch treaſon in her ſight?

NORFOLK.

My treaſon is not 'gainſt my lawful Queen,
But againſt her, to whom I'm bound by ties
Dearer than dull cold duty———

MARY.

MARY.

Mean you me?
Doubtleſs you made confeſſion of your love;
Was that a treaſon againſt me? 'twas great,
Worthy yourſelf; magnanimous to ſcorn
Her utmoſt rage, and brave her dire revenge.

NORFOLK, [*Aſide.*]

How ſhall I wound her gen'rous, noble heart?
'Her, whoſe pure mind, whoſe unſuſpicious thoughts
'Dreſs up my ſins in virtuous robes; thereby
'But making them more hideous in my ſight;
'And me more hateful to myſelf.'—Oh, fool!
That cou'd be brought to purchaſe this vile life,
By quitting all that's dear to me on earth!

MARY.

What do I hear? Oh, ſay not ſo, my love!
You are not capable of ſuch a thought.

NORFOLK.

Alas, I've pledg'd my word; I've ſworn to it.

MARY.

Extorted vows are void, mere idle breath.

NORFOLK.

Mine have not been ſo hitherto—an oath,
A ſacred oath——

MARY.

Had I no oath from you?

NORFOLK, [*Aſide.*]

Ah! there's the dreadful maze, the double road,
Where each path leads to ruin and diſgrace.

MARY.

Oh, Norfolk, do not leave me! do not forſake
Your poor forlorn, and faithful priſoner;
Already loſt to all the world but thee;
My only comfort, refuge under Heav'n.
Oh, 'twou'd belie the tenor of your life:
What wou'd I not for thee? Let all the Kings,
The rival Princes that have woo'd in vain,
Here in my priſon recommence their ſuit,
Wou'd I not ſpurn them all for thee? Yet fly;
I'm loſt; but you are born to better fates.

NORFOLK,

NORFOLK, [*Aſide.*]

Be firm, my ſoul! Oh, torture!

MARY.

Cruel man!
To caſt me off becauſe I'm here confin'd:
What ſent me hither but my love for thee?
When laſt I ſaw you, then you were a man,
Replete with courage, gentleneſs, and love.
What have I done to change your nature thus?
If I'm in fault, ſtrike at this wretched heart;
Let it not break! Or leave me to my fate,
To chains and dungeons, inſults and hard words;
Let ſavage Huntingdon diſmiſs my train——

NORFOLK.

The horror of my crimes comes thick upon me.
Cou'd I then leave thee thus, a prey to grief?
The ſport of ruffian tongues? Why did not Heav'n
Blaſt with its lightning, and benumb theſe limbs,
So ſlow in ſtriving to break ope the gates
Of this accurſed cell? Oh, foul diſgrace!
Where ſhall I 'ſcape the pointing hand of ſhame?
Here let me ſue for pardon—All I aſk,
Is to devote my life to reſcue thee;
To ſtem the torrent, and oppoſe the flood,
Defy the deluge of o'erwhelming fate,
And ſnatch thee from the waves of miſery.

MARY.

Are you then ſtill my Norfolk? Do I dream?

NORFOLK.

No, while there's life in this poor frame, and while——

MARY.

Enough, my Norfolk! I am the debtor now:
Your noble reſolution doth reſtore
The genial current of my frozen blood;
The blood of many hundred Kings doth riſe
To chaſe deſpondency, and ſwell my ſoul
With thoughts of nobler deeds, and times to come.
Mary ſhall once more triumph in her turn.

NORFOLK.

NORFOLK.

Then farewel, beautiful and injur'd ſaint!
Good angels hover round this dark abode,
And guard you till the cries of honour's voice
Shake theſe old battlements, and rend this roof;
Burſt wide theſe bars, and once more charm the world
With radiant light of matchleſs beauty's beams.
Adieu, my love!

MARY.

Remember me—Farewel!

ACT IV.

SCENE I. WHITEHALL.

Enter Elizabeth *and* Cecil.

ELIZABETH.

CECIL! what more? the Duke, you ſay, is ſecur'd.

CECIL.

Aye! beyond 'ſcape, my liege!—He's on his way;
Perhaps has reach'd the Tower.

ELIZABETH.

Sir, he may thank
Your interceſſion for that liberty
Which prov'd his bane.

CECIL.

Reproaches from my Queen,
So juſt, fall like the chaſtiſement of Heav'n
On thoſe it favours.

ELIZABETH.

Heav'n favours none
But thoſe who ſee their errors, and repent.

CECIL.

If I repent me not the part I took,
May I be ſharer in his puniſhment.

ELIZABETH.

We know your faith; 'twas error, we're convinc'd;
Let aſſiduity atone for it;
Probe this infernal plot.

CECIL.

'Tis done! Behold
This train of correſpondence, 'twixt the Duke,
The Pope, the Queen of Scots.

ELIZABETH.

The treaſon is clear;
Cecil, my foes are numerous and ſtrong.

CECIL.

Were they in number as the ſummer leaves,
Their autumn doth approach; they ſoon ſhall fall,
Blaſted, and driven by the wind.

ELIZABETH.

This day
One falls at leaſt; this faithleſs Lord no more
Shall dupe me with his promiſes; let him
Await his doom—' yet ſtay! his birth and name—

'CECIL.

' Are but freſh motives for example ſake.

'ELIZABETH.

' Then be it ſo.

'CECIL.

' And her Ambaſſador,
' Who wou'd have forc'd the Tower, and ſeiz'd yourſelf?

'ELIZABETH.

' That muſt be nicely weighed; for ſovereignty,
' Aye, but the ſhadow of it claims regard:
' Tis not for us to extinguiſh haſtily
' That emanation from the royal light;
' Altho' the ſource from whence it ſprings may ſeem
' Somewhat obſcur'd and clouded.

'CECIL.

' But if threats
' Produce confeſſion, we may learn to guard
' 'Gainſt farther harm.'

ELIZABETH.

Proceed. [*Exit* Cecil.
He needs no ſpur;
Nay, he anticipates my inmoſt thoughts.
Th' ambitious Duke's diſpos'd of; ſuch half-pac'd,
Soft, ſcrupulous fools, make poor conſpirators.
Mary yet lives: but for the Ambaſſadors,
I ſhou'd have ſent her croſs the Tweed ere now,
To Murray's care: I wou'd it had been done
When firſt ſhe threw herſelf into my hands;
It ſeem'd a conſummation of ſucceſs,
A period to my cares: but now this prize,

This

This precious prize, ſo unexpectedly
Entangled in my toils, proves a fierce ſnake
Which I can neither ſafely hold, or looſe;
While yet I have her in my graſp, ſhe ſlips,
Twining her folds around my limbs—Alas!
I live in fear of my own priſoner,
And tremble on my Throne. [*Exit* Eliz.

SCENE II. *Enter* Daviſon *to* Cecil.

DAVISON.

The fatal order's ſent; e'en now the Duke
Prepares for death.

CECIL.

Oh, Daviſon! theſe times
Demand diſpatch; patience muſt have its bounds,
Or change its nature, and degenerate
To dangerous weakneſs.

DAVISON.

Yet the piteous fall
Of this beloved, generous Duke, will rend
The hearts of all his countrymen: the ſtreets
Are throng'd with weeping multitudes; and groans
Betray more deep-felt ſorrow than the tongue
Dares, in theſe days, to utter.

CECIL.

Such eſteem,
And general ſympathy, denote his ſway
And empire o'er the affections of the land;
And ſhou'd have ſerved to other ends than ſtriſe,
For the romantic honour and renown
Of liberating helpleſs captive Queens. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The* Tower.

Norfolk *and the* Lieutenant *diſcovered.*

NORFOLK.

No, good Lieutenant; I am at a point,
The very point, and ſummit of my path,
Up life's ſteep rough aſcent; and now muſt leap
The dreadful precipice.

LIEUTENANT.

Yet ſtill, my Lord,
There's room for mercy; and if fame ſpeaks true,
Good cauſe for it. 'Tis ſaid your Grace did ſave
Her Majeſty's own perſon from aſſault.

NORFOLK.

As I'm a Chriſtian man, and doom'd to die,
'Tis true; and never have I aught devis'd
Againſt her ſacred ſelf: but 'tis in vain
To ſue for mercy; nor is it my wiſh
To aſk that mercy which I've once abus'd.
Cou'd I but, during this ſad interval,
Cou'd I but ſend one——

[*Enter a ſervant delivering a paper to the* Lieutenant.]

Ha! what's that I ſee?

LIEUTENANT, [*Reading.*]

Alas!——

NORFOLK.

Enough! I read it in your looks:
My hour is come!——

LIEUTENANT.

My Lord, the guards attend.

Enter Sheriff *and Guards.*

NORFOLK.

I am content, thank Heav'n, to meet my fate;
Not from indifference to life, or claim
To innocence; far otherwiſe in both:
But knowing mercy's infinite extent,
I caſt the world behind me—One farewell!
And then—

SHERIFF.

My Lord, in truth, we may not wait.

NORFOLK.

I go—and, good Lieutenant, tell the Queen
That he who lately ſtood in higheſt rank,
(Now ſunk below the meaneſt citizen)
Tho' he's pronounc'd a traitor by his Peers,
Whom yet he blames not, ſtill appeals to Heav'n
In his laſt moments, that there lives not one

More

More true to his religion, country, Queen,
Than dying Thomas Howard—Then implore
Her kind compaſſion to my orphan babes.
Say that my dying words were, "Peace be with her!"
And as I am the firſt to fall by the axe,
So may I be the laſt, in her bleſt reign!
May ſhe do juſtice, and protect th' oppreſs'd!
So may her fame reach all poſterity!
And by her hand, do thou, oh, gracious Heav'n!
Build up the walls of England!

SHERIFF.

Alas! My Lord!
Delay is at our peril, we beſeech—

NORFOLK.

A little moment! I had ſomething yet—
But let it paſs! here! here! it reſts; while yet
Life's current flows, while yet my nerves perform
Their functions—Mary! I muſt think on thee!
Bleſs thee with my laſt breath: may Heav'n afford
That ſuccour which this mortal arm in vain
Attempted! may'ſt thou never feel ſuch pangs
As he who dies for thee! and now, e'en now,
Flies with impatience from this hell to ſeek
A refuge in the cold embrace of death.—
Lead on!—Oh, Mary! Mary! Mary! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. WHITEHALL.

Enter Elizabeth *and* Cecil.

ELIZABETH.

Cecil! our laſt commands have been perform'd?

CECIL.

Madam, they have.—

ELIZABETH.

And how behav'd the Duke?

CECIL.

With manly, decent conſtancy; and ſeem'd
Moſt penitent in that he broke his word;
But ſtill diſclaiming fully all deſigns
Againſt your crown and perſon; at the laſt,

His parting ſoul ſeem'd bent on his own fate
Leſs than on Mary's———

ELIZABETH. [*Aſide.*]

How! how's this! intent
On her at laſt? muſt her attractions reach
E'en to the very brink of death? alas!
That each progreſſive circumſtance of woe,
Tends but to prove the power of her charms.

CECIL.

'Her miniſter, the Biſhop, hath confeſs'd
'His ſhare of guilt, and open'd all the plot
'Twixt him and Alva—Philip and the Pope.

ELIZABETH.

'Then bid him inſtantly depart my realm,
'If he beholds to-morrow's ſetting ſun
'On Engliſh ground, his privilege is gone,
'He dies a traitor's death—and from his Queen,
'No more ambaſſadors I'll entertain;
'Or riſk my life to grace my priſoner.

CECIL.

'The French King's miniſter, of late, is grown
'Importunate for freſh indulgences;
'That ſhe may be allowed to take the air,
'With fit attire and decent retinue:
'All this is aſk'd of grace; not as a part
'Of Anjou's marriage treaty.

ELIZABETH.

'If that ſerve
'T' amuſe and hood-wink France, ſhe'll think no more
'On Mary.'—Daviſon! what brings thee thus?

Enter Daviſon.

DAVISON.

Diſpatches from your Miniſter in France.

ELIZABETH.

Of weighty matter?

DAVISON.

Heavier far, and worſe
Than mortal ears can bear; Heav'n guard us all

From

From ſuch diſaſters as no tongue can tell!
A viſitation which the world, till now,
Ne'er ſaw or heard of.———————

ELIZABETH.

Speak! no more delay.

DAVISON.

Then hear the fate of all our friends in France,
Swept from the face of th' earth, exterminate,
In one black night, at one infernal blow
Dealt by the hand of Rome; there ſcarcely lives
A proteſtant to tell the maſſacre.

ELIZABETH *and* CECIL.

The maſſacre!

DAVISON.

I ſaid the word: the tale
Runs thus:—That ſignals from the Louvre top
Proclaim'd the time of ſlaughter; Paris firſt,
And 'tis ſuppos'd, within an hour, that all
The cities of that kingdom ſtream'd with blood.
Nor age, nor ſex was ſpar'd; old men, nay babes,
Faſt in their helpleſs mothers' arms, were pierc'd
With the ſame weapon; ſick men in their beds,
Brave warriors in their ſleep, were butcher'd: one,
One only check'd their courſe—The firſt who fell,
Brave Coligni, whoſe very name appals
The bigot's heart—At ſight of his grey locks,
So known where'er the thickeſt battle rag'd,
They ſtood aghaſt, till one more harden'd wretch,
With eyes averted, ſtabb'd him to the heart.

ELIZABETH.

Oh! let me ſhed one tear for that great man!

DAVISON.

'Marſhals of France, and Biſhops led the band,
'Invoking Heav'n, yet calling out for blood;
'And, oh! eternal infamy, the King
'Look'd on, encourag'd, nay imbru'd his hands,
'His ſacred hands, in his own ſubjects' blood:
'Pointing his carabine at thoſe who fled
'Apart, like ſtricken deer—while he, in ſport,

'At his balcony revell'd, 'midſt a throng
'Of ladies, praiſing his dexterity,
'Taught, like himſelf, by his more cruel mother,
'From early youth, to jeſt at homicide.

ELIZABETH.

'No more, the tale's too dreadful, I'll retire.'
May Heav'n preſerve my people from this curſe!
War, famine, peſtilence, are trifles all
Compar'd to this corruption of the mind,
This degradation of humanity.
I'll to my cloſet; let none dare approach;
No cares of ſtate preſume to interrupt
My holy ſolitude——— [*Exit* Elizabeth.

DAVISON.

The Queen's retir'd
Moſt opportunely, for I've that to tell,
Which to no ear but thine———

CECIL.

What, Daviſon!
Haſt thou, that can the leaſt attention claim,
After thy dreadful tale?

DAVISON.

That which demands
All your diſpatch, prudence, activity,
The Queen's in danger, and each hour loſt
Appears an age, ruffians there are——

CECIL.

How's this?
Her life in danger? ſay by whom; and how?

DAVISON.

'Theſe ruffians came from Rheims, a ſeminary
'Intoxicated with th' omnipotence
'Of papal power, and Rome's accurs'd decrees,
'Thinking that if they periſh'd in th' attempt,
'They gain'd a glorious crown of martyrdom.
'This motley crew, compos'd of ſoldiers, prieſts
'Of various orders, mad enthuſiaſts,
'So confident in their iniquity,
'Caſt lots for weapons; then in full career

'Of

'Of riot, 'midſt their cups, for frolick ſake,
'Were painted in one portrait, each with th' arms
'That fell to him by lot.'—Theſe villains all
Are ſeiz'd.

CECIL.

'Can you no further trace the plot?
'Are you ſo ſlack a friend? till now I thought
'That if you gain'd the clue your zeal would ſoon
'Tread back the windings of the labyrinth,
'And from her dark receſs drag forth to light
'This ſorcereſs.

DAVISON.

'Miſtruſt not yet that zeal;
'Behold this fruit of it.'—Theſe lines I've gain'd
[*Delivering Letters.*
From Gifford, a corrupt, abandon'd prieſt,
Who ſold his fellow traitors—theſe are ſaid
To be the writing of Queen Mary's hand;
And whether true———

CECIL.

Enough! they ſtrongly bear
The ſemblance—now 'tis done—thanks, Daviſon!
I'll to the Queen, nor heed her prohibition.
[Cecil *knocks at the cloſet door*, Elizabeth *enters from thence.*]

ELIZABETH.

Who dares with ſacrilegious ſteps approach
And intervene betwixt his ſovereign's pray'rs,
And Heav'n's impending vengeance on our race?

CECIL.

'Twas not without juſt cauſe—

ELIZABETH.

No cauſe I truſt,
Warrants plain diſobedience of my word,
My ſtrict commands—Sir!———

CECIL.

Madam, theſe events
Brook no delay.———

ELIZA-

ELIZABETH.

Events! why what events?
Canſt thou add flames to Ætna's raging fire?
Imagination can no ſequel find
Worthy the tale he told.

CECIL.

This hour Daviſon
Fears for your royal ſelf.

ELIZABETH.

Speak, Daviſon!

DAVISON.

——I truſt
All will be well, for the conſpirators
Are almoſt all ſecur'd.

ELIZABETH.

Conſpirators!

DAVISON.

Aye, moſt inveterate, 'implacable!
'Hell never ſent ſuch fiends to curſe mankind,
'Taught by religious zeal to emulate,
'Nay to conteſt the prize of parricide.

ELIZABETH.

'You ſay they are ſecur'd?

CECIL.

'Know you their names?

DAVISON.

'Their chief is Babington; a youth whoſe zeal
'For Mary ſprings from a diſtemper'd brain,
'Inflam'd by love.'—And more 'tis fully prov'd
That Mary's in the league.

CECIL.

——An aſſociate
In this conſpiracy.

ELIZABETH.

Remove her ſtraight
From gentle Shrewſbury's care to Fotheringay.
Let her no more be treated as a Queen. [*Exit* Daviſon.
Cecil, am I not juſt? why to what length
Will ſhe abuſe my patience?

CECIL.

CECIL.

How many crimes
Which now diſgrace the annals of the world
Owe their exiſtence to falſe clemency,
And weak procraſtination! She muſt die;
Or, you, a willing ſacrifice, muſt yield
Your life to ſave her.

ELIZABETH.

Mean you, that thro' fear,
I ſhou'd aſſume her part, and baſely turn
Aſſaſſin?

CECIL.

Heaven forbid! are we then ſunk
Below the level of the pagan world?
For they have juſtice; Juſtice is the right
Of all beneath the ſun; and ſhall not you,
The ſource and fountain of it, be allow'd
What you diſpenſe to all? Are royal lives
Worth leſs than thoſe of ſubjects? or is ſhe,
This mighty captive, paramount to laws,
Divine and human?

ELIZABETH.

Whither tends this theme?

CECIL.

To juſtice; to the fair impartial courſe
Of juſtice———

ELIZABETH.

Cecil! you forget yourſelf,
And her whom you addreſs: *Is* this your zeal,
Your reverence for royalty? What law
Can render her amenable to me?

CECIL.

Nature has laws; inſtinct, alike to all,
Promulgates them—'Aſſaſſination needs
'No human ſtatutes to declare its guilt;
'They are but feeble, artificial props,
'The patch work of ſociety, which ſerve
'Only to ſwell the catalogue of crimes,
'By inefficient ſanguinary means.'

Thank

Thank Heav'n no mortal is exempt from law
Who ſhall attempt the life of England's Queen.

ELIZABETH.

Aye, in this iſland; but the general voice
Of Europe wou'd cry ſhame!—Preſumptuous man!
No more—Let not your forwardneſs o'erſtep
The bounds of our forbearance, nor abuſe
Your ſovereign's ear with baſe ſuggeſtions; ceaſe!

Enter Daviſon.

What freſh diſaſter now? hate, fear, and death,
Revolt, and treaſon, mark thy ominous ſteps.

DAVISON.

No prince was ever more belov'd and fear'd;
Your people in one bond aſſociated
Join to defend your life, and, with one voice,
Call for immediate juſtice on her head,
Whoſe life is incompatible with yours—

ELIZABETH.

For that alternative, if that were all,
Freely I'd pardon all her injuries:
But for my people's ſake, it cannot be:
Heav'n has entruſted them, and their true faith,
To my defence.

DAVISON.

Our lives, religion, all!
Grant, oh! Grant juſtice!

ELIZABETH.

Have I not ſworn to it,
When I ſucceeded to th' imperial Crown?
You have our leave, our warrant, Daviſon.

[*Exit* Daviſon.

[*Aſide.*] Heav'ns, what have I pronounc'd! I dare not think!
Then I muſt act, and leave ſlow timorous thought;
This is no time for ſcruples and remorſe.
Cecil, 'tis done! ſince nothing but her blood
Can ſatisfy your thirſty ſouls——

CECIL.

CECIL.

My liege,
Your grateful people will applaud the deed;
Bleſs the defender of their faith.

ELIZABETH.

'Tis falſe;
The univerſal world will curſe the deed;
All future ages execrate the name
Of her who brought anointed royalty
To ſuch diſgrace: yet there is time—who waits?

Enter Servant.

Fly quickly; call back Daviſon—Alas! [*Exit* Servant.
Alas, poor Queen! Cruel, perfidious man!
Your baneful counſel prompted me to this.

Enter Daviſon.

Oh, are you come?—Daviſon! I recal
The horrid ſentence——

CECIL.

Such are now the thanks,
And ever were, of thoſe who weakly ſtrive
To ſave a Prince determin'd on his fall.
Madam! ſince, inattentive to my prayers,
You thus devote yourſelf—let me retire
Unacceſſary to your fate.

ELIZABETH.

Cecil!
I muſt not loſe your ſervice.

CECIL.

Why ſhould I
Stay to endure that vengeance, which will fall
On all your Miniſters, when Mary's plots
Rob England of her Queen.

DAVISON.

'Till that's atchiev'd,
She'll never reſt; her object is your Crown.
Has ſhe renounced her claim? No; to this hour
She ſometimes boaſts her title to your Throne,
As confidently as ſhe us'd in France,

When

When ſhe, with her firſt huſband's fleurs de lys,
Quarter'd the arms of England.

ELIZABETH.

That, indeed——
That was an early pledge; with her firſt milk
She drank the ſeeds of hate; ſtill, as ſhe grew,
Th' inveterate poiſon ſpread; and now ſhe pours,
Full in my boſom, all the venemous ſtore.

CECIL.

Oh, 'tis not mercy, it is cruelty
To ſpare her, when the ſafety of your realm
Hangs on her fate; what if her voice ſhou'd pierce
The priſon walls, and thro' the nation ſound
A ſignal for a ſecond maſſacre?

ELIZABETH.

Ah, there is the word! that word recalls my mind,
Chills all my blood, and drives its current back.
Heav'n doth exact a ſacrifice to thoſe
Who fell for our true faith: 'tis Heav'n's decree—
It is reſolv'd—She dies—Fly, Daviſon!
Outſtrip the winds, and with the winged ſpeed
Of lightning, let the thunder-bolt of Heav'n
Strike her devoted head!—Away! Away! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. FOTHERINGAY CASTLE.

Enter Lady Douglas *and* Beton.

LADY DOUGLAS.

BETON, alas! you propheſy too well;
Each moment brings ſome melancholy proof
Of your foreboding ſpirit.—

BETON.

Cou'd I doubt
The conſequence of ſuch facility?
You know how oft and earneſtly I urg'd
The danger of ſubmiſſion; but to plead,
A Queen, in her own perſon, thus to plead!—

LADY DOUGLAS.

Had ſhe not pleaded, this pre-judging Court,
As by confeſſion, had pronounc'd her doom,
And yet, cou'd ſhe ſuſpect that ſuch a liſt
Of all the great nobility, ſuch names,
The warriors, heroes, patriots of the land,
Cou'd ſo diſgracefully be led to join
In concert to her ruin?—

BETON.

Oh! too oft
Servile compliances are brought about
By joining numbers and great names, where none,
No ſingle, worthy individual
Would ſhow his face, or lend his honeſt fame.
Know you what urg'd her to appear in court?

LADY DOUGLAS.

'Twas to defend her honour that ſhe came,
In all the majeſty of innocence;
Deſcending from a throne, ſhe offer'd up
Her dignity, a willing ſacrifice,

To her fair fame; impell'd by conſcious pride,
That inward pride which purity of mind
Inſpires, and prompts to dare corruption's art,
To face, upon unequal terms, the wiles
Of perjur'd treachery.—Oh! 'twas a ſight
New to the world; ſo ſtrange, that mortal eyes
Their credit loſt; none who beheld, believed;
But, Beton, ſuch a mockery as this
Can ne'er be realiz'd?—

BETON.

Oh, ſurely not;
'Tis but an artifice to juſtify
Paſt cruelties; and, what I fear the moſt,
Perhaps ſtill cloſer cuſtody—

LADY DOUGLAS.

Alas!
They dare not ſure proceed to take her life?

BETON.

Oh, no! 'twou'd rouſe all Europe; ſhake all thrones;
Looſen the deepeſt-rooted monarchies:—
They dare not think of it—you ſee they're gone
For farther counſel to the Star Chamber.

LADY DOUGLAS.

'Tis time t' attend the Queen, Heav'n guard her ſtill!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. Mary's *Chamber*, Fotheringay Caſtle.

Enter Lady Douglas *to the Queen.*

MARY.

Douglas! come hither Douglas! ſit by me;
Thou art the conſtant ſolace of my woes.
I am almoſt worn out with grief and care;
And, as you ſometimes hint, I plainly find
My health is much impair'd—I had not ſtrength
Or ſpirits to do juſtice to my cauſe
Before this Court.—

LADY DOUGLAS.

Oh, my royal Miſtreſs!
How cou'd you condeſcend to plead to them?

MARY.

MARY.

Alas! too confident in innocence,
I undervalued human treachery;
Suffer'd my ears to catch the ſpecious ſound
Of Hatton's ſoft perſuaſive eloquence;
Who, fair and falſe as Belial, from his tongue
Shed manna, which beguil'd my ſilly heart,
' Brought me to compromiſe my dignity,
' By condeſcenſions, which the petulance
' Of rancorous Burleigh's bitter enmity,
' Had ne'er effected.'—Oh, accurſed fraud!

LADY DOUGLAS.

Fraud! aye, and open force; did they not ſeize
Your papers, burſt your cabinet, and rob,
Aye, baſely pil er all your little hoard,
The remnant of your treaſure, which you ſav'd
To pay your poor domeſtics, and for acts
Of charity?—

MARY.

But that, you know, of late
Has been prohibited; becauſe 'twas found
One ſtill remaining ſource of happineſs.

LADY DOUGLAS.

Infernal, unexampled infamy!
Yes, my dear Miſtreſs, 'twas a cruelty
More felt by you than by the poor themſelves
Who loſt your daily charity.——

MARY.

Douglas!
Forſaken as I am, I cou'd not think
That my own Secretary wou'd have turn'd
Againſt his Miſtreſs, and, in that, where he,
Above all others, knew me innocent:
I never much eſteem'd the man; but yet
I did not think the viper wou'd have bit
The hand that fed it.—' He firſt came to me
' From my poor uncle, the late Cardinal,
' My uncle was the prop of all my counſels;
' Alas! he's gone; and Charles, my brother, now
' No longer reigns in France—he too is loſt!

'His end was wretched and unnatural.'—
And for my ſon, my only child, he reigns
In Scotland, patient of a mother's wrongs;
'I am forbid to hear from him.'—Alas!
Had he the heart or ſpirit of a man—

Enter Beton.

BETON.

Pardon the meſſenger of diſmal news!

LADY DOUGLAS. [*Aſide.*]

Oh, me, what now?—

BETON.

And, oh, prepare to hear
The heavieſt tidings—

MARY.

I've been long prepar'd.

BETON.

Your own misfortunes you have ever borne
With fortitude, but others ſufferings—

MARY.

What others? ſpeak! alas, I gueſs—

BETON.

Too well
I fear—

MARY.

The Duke?—

BETON.

His troubles are no more;
'He reſts in peace, beyond the tyrant's ſway,
'Where mortal envy cannot reach: alas!'
Poor man! he fell a victim to his love;
His dying breath ſtill bleſs'd you.—

MARY.

Oh, juſt Heavens!
'Since it has pleas'd you thus to viſit him
'For my offences—let my prayers aſcend
'In his behalf—yet ſtay; he's riſen now,
'Whence he looks down with pity and contempt
'On worldly cares; views with ſereniy
'Her deſpicable malice.'—Oh, mean wretch!

Why

Why dar'd you not let fall your vengeance here?
He dies at laſt in my defence!—to ſave
This poor forlorn exiſtence—Fie upon't!
Why lingers yet my breath?—Out, out, for ſhame!
Seek the wide air, and catch my Norfolk's ſoul.

SCENE III. *The Hall.*

Enter Beton, *meeting Sir* Amias Paulet.

BETON. [*Aſide.*]
Paulet arrived!—What is your pleaſure here?

SIR A. PAULET.
I am about to ſeek your Miſtreſs, Sir.—

BETON.
The Queen is ill at eaſe, and needs repoſe.

SIR A. PAULET.
Sir, I have buſineſs to communicate—

BETON.
Concerning her?—

SIR A. PAULET.
Aye, very nearly too.—

BETON.
From Weſtminſter?—

SIR A. PAULET.
From the Star Chamber, Sir;
No leſs than that her Secretaries both
Have now confeſs'd the plot, and ſworn to it.

BETON.
Oh, perjur'd, venal ſlaves! They never dar'd
Confront her with theſe murderous lies—the ſight
Of injur'd innocence had choak'd their ſpeech.

SIR A. PAULET.
Say rather their repentance has produc'd
Full proof to juſtify the courſe of law.

BETON.
Who, but a judge determin'd to convict,
Wou'd credit thoſe whoſe faith is forfeited
By plain, avow'd deſertion of their truſt?
'Twere a judicial murder—the worſt crime

This ſinful world has known: firſt, as the Judge
Is, for his purity, and wiſdom, plac'd
In high authority, and charg'd to guard
Fair innocence; then, as the ſufferer
By ſuch injuſtice, feels diſgrace and ſhame
Added to all the bitterneſs of death.

SIR A. PAULET.

Is ſhe, who claims protection, above law?

BETON.

Call you impriſonment protection? Oh!
Mere ſubterfuges, worthy of your Queen;
This laſt exploit of bribing evidence
Was an atchievement ſuiting her great power,
Her riches, her wiſe miniſters—Oh, ſhame!

SIR A. PAULET.

Is this the language, Sir, of Mary Stuart,
Late Queen of Scotland? ſhe ſhall anſwer for it;
I muſt proceed to her.—

BETON.

Mean, ſervile wretch!
Paulet! if you're a man, ſome future day
You'll not refuſe atonement for theſe words.

SCENE IV. *The Queen's Chamber.*

Queen Mary, *Lady* Douglas, *Two Maids, and Sir* Amias Paulet.

MARY.

Are theſe your orders, Sir, before my face
To take my canopy?—

SIR A. PAULET.

No doubt they are.

MARY.

And you're inſtructed thus t' inſult a Queen?

SIR A. PAULET.

I am inſtructed to conſider you
As one attempting to deſtroy a Queen.

MARY.

'Tis falſe, by all that's ſacred! Heav'n well knows
I wou'd not touch the meaneſt life on earth,

Much leſs the Queen's, for all that ſhe enjoys,
All her great empire—No; on my royal word.—

SIR A. PAULET.

Henceforth, no more let convicts idly dream
Of forfeit titles—Farewell, Mary Stuart!

MARY.

Thinks ſhe that ſuch indignities degrade
My native titles? tell her ſhe doth fix
Eternal ſhame, contempt, and ridicule
On her own name, by theſe low practices;
And ſay, tho' ſhe may rob me of my life,
Mary will die the lawful Queen of Scots.

[*Exit* Sir A. Paulet.

LADY DOUGLAS.

Oh, my dear Miſtreſs! heed not ſuch baſe men,
They are beneath your care.—

MARY.

They harraſs me;
My ſpirits are worn out; I'll lay me down;

[Mary *reclines on her Sopha.*

Methinks ſoft muſic wou'd compoſe my nerves:
'I once had muſic at command,'—but, oh!
The lute's unſtrung that ſmooth'd the brow of care;
Cold is the tongue that charm'd with living fire.

'LADY DOUGLAS.

'Allow your faithful maid to try her voice.

[*Here Queen* Mary's *Lamentations ſhould be ſung by Lady* Douglas *or one of the Maids.*

'MARY.

'Theſe plaintive ſtrains bring quiet to my mind,
'Balm to my troubled ſoul; they ſooth my woes,
'Recall old times, and tell me what I was.
'Douglas! while yet I was in infancy,
'The cruel father of this cruel Queen
'Aſk'd me in marriage, from my native land,
'For his own ſon; and failing in his ſuit,
'Wag'd war with Scotland: afterwards, you know,
'It was my fate to mount the throne of France,
'As conſort of young Francis; on whoſe death,

'(Oh,

'(Oh, ever lamentable, fatal loss!)
'I ſtay'd in France till, by the jealouſy
'And cruel arts of Catherine, I was driven
'To ſeek my own hereditary crown.'—
Doſt thou remember how reluctantly
I left the gay and ſprightly Court of France?

LADY DOUGLAS.

Aye, as 'twere yeſterday—I ſee you ſtill,
Fix'd like a ſtatue at the veſſel's ſtern,
With eyes intent upon the Gallic ſhore,
Watching each leſſening object, till the coaſt,
The wide-extended coaſt, and diſtant ſpires
Of Calais, glittering in the evening ſkies,
Alone remain'd in view; darkneſs came on,
And tears inceſſant; till the morning calm
Gave one faint glimpſe of the departing ſcene:
Oh, then you beat your breaſt and wav'd your hand,
While intermingled tears and ſobs, half choak'd
Your ill-articulated, laſt adieu.

MARY.

Oh, what a change for a young Queen of France!
From all the pleaſures of that ſplendid Court,
To the moroſe, ſour aſpect, the dull cant,
And furious zeal, of Scotland's puritans!

LADY DOUGLAS.

What barbarous, fanatic inſolence!

MARY.

Oh, I was deſtin'd in my native land
To heavier ills; to Darnley's cruelty;
Murray's ambition; Morton's treachery;
My ſubjects' mean deſertion of their Queen,
Their baſe revolt; and baſer calumnies.

LADY DOUGLAS.

The time ſhall come when the impartial world
Shall nobly vindicate your injur'd fame.

MARY.

Long ſince, dear Douglas, I've reſign'd this world,
With all its vanities, and fix'd my heart
On Heav'n alone—Ah, me! who's this?—

Enter

Enter Davison.

LADY DOUGLAS.

Who art thou?

DAVISON.

One whose approach forebodes a blacker storm
Than e'er struck terror in the human breast.

MARY.

Know you this man?——

LADY DOUGLAS.

No; but I fear he brings
Fresh insults and new rigours.—

MARY.

Whence come you?

DAVISON.

From the Queen's self; who most reluctantly,
Nor without many bitter sighs and tears—

LADY DOUGLAS.

Tears of a crocodile.—

DAVISON.

I say, with tears
The Queen dispatch'd me, to announce the fate,
The fate contain'd within this warrant.—

[*Delivering a Warrant.*

MARY.

Ha! [*reading the Warrant.*

Enter Beton.—*A Drum is heard beating a slow March.*

BETON.

Oh, mercy! Heavens! alas, my Queen! I fear
Some dreadful fate; the Earls of Shrewsbury
And Huntingdon, attended by the guards,
Are at the castle gate.—

LADY DOUGLAS.

Ah, here they come!
Th' array of death! Ah! is it come to this?

Enter Shrewsbury *and* Huntingdon, *with Guards, Executioner, &c.*

SHREWSBURY.

The painful office which I now perform—

MARY.

MARY.

I know your buſineſs.—

SHREWSBURY.

Ah! know you, alas!
With what diſpatch we're order'd to proceed?

LADY DOUGLAS.

Oh, murder! murder! cruel murderers, ſtay!

MARY.

Patience, my child! I did not think, I own,
My ſiſter Queen wou'd have proceeded thus;
But if my body cannot ſuſtain one blow,
My ſoul deſerves not thoſe eternal joys
In Heav'n my holy faith has promis'd me.

HUNTINGDON.

'Tis your accurſed faith that ſeals your doom;
While you're on earth, there is no ſurety
For our true faith—

MARY.

What do I hear? good Heav'n!
Say you that I'm to ſuffer for my faith?
Oh, happy and glad tidings! glorious news!
'Repeat that word, thou meſſenger of joy!'
'Angels deſcending from their bleſt abodes,
'Cou'd not have hail'd me with more welcome ſounds.—
'Then it hath pleas'd the gracious Heav'ns at laſt
'To hear my prayers, and recompenſe my woes.'
Now, in one bleſſed moment, all my pain,
All my long ſufferings are exchanged for bliſs.
Theſe ears have heard me thus proclaim'd a ſaint;
And Mary's, aye, poor Mary's weeping eyes
Have liv'd to ſee her crown of martyrdom.—
I'll make ſhort preparation; and mean while,
Let all my ſervants be in readineſs;
And bid my confeſſor to follow me.

LADY DOUGLAS.

We will obey— [*Exit Lady* Douglas, *with the Maids.*

HUNTINGDON.

This may not be allow'd;
We came not here to ſee our holy faith

Mock'd

Mock'd by the tricks and ſuperſtitious forms
Of Papal ceremony—Your confeſſor
Muſt not approach—

MARY.

Sir, I was born to reign;
I am your Miſtreſs' kinſwoman; like her,
Deſcended from King Henry—Dowager
Of France, and Scotland's lawful Queen; as ſuch,
I pray you treat me—— [*Exit* Mary *to her Oratory.*

BETON.

Inhuman tyranny,
That wou'd extend its barbarous cruelties
Beyond the grave!—

SHREWSBURY.

We may not violate
Our ſtrict commands—

BETON.

Heav'n will remember them:
You are, then, order'd to refuſe a Queen,
In the laſt moments of her life, thoſe rites,
That conſolation, which is always given
To the moſt harden'd, graceleſs criminals,
That e'er inſulted juſtice, or brought ſhame
On human nature?—

HUNTINGDON.

Nay, urge not that; for, lo!
A pious prelate now attends without
To offer his aſſiſtance—I'll propoſe—
[Huntingdon *offers to go towards the Oratory.*

BETON.

If you're not loſt to all humanity,
Diſturb not her laſt meditations thus.
[*Stopping* Huntingdon.

Enter Lady Douglas *with four Maids, a Phyſician, and an Almoner*—Beton *places himſelf with them.*

HUNTINGDON.

Why are you all aſſembled here?—

LADY

LADY DOUGLAS.

You ſee
The ſad remains of her poor family.

HUNTINGDON.

You are, at beſt, but uſeleſs, idle ſhew;
Perhaps employ'd for ſuperſtitious uſe;
Retire!—

LADY DOUGLAS.

You cannot mean to hinder us
From this laſt wretched office?—

HUNTINGDON.

Nay, begone!

BETON.

Infernal ſavage!—

LADY DOUGLAS.

Yet have mercy, Lords!
Oh! you are far more gentle, Shrewſbury!
Drive not her few, poor, faithful maids from her;
Let them receive her bleſſing, and behold
Their dying Miſtreſs' looks, and cloſe her eyes.
In pity, nay, in decency, comply;
Is't fit the perſon of a royal Queen
Shou'd lie a mangled and unheeded corſe
Without her maids to ſhroud thoſe precious limbs,
Which kneeling Princeſſes were proud to adorn?

SHREWSBURY.

'Tis not in nature to reſiſt the claim.

Enter Mary *from her Oratory, dreſſed gorgeouſly, with a Croſs and Beads.*

MARY.

This world to me is as a thing that's paſt;
A burden ſhaken off—The retroſpect
Exhibits nothing but a wearifome
And tedious pilgrimage—What is to come
Opens a ſcene of glory to my eyes:
Therefore with joy I haſten to begin
This courſe of triumph——Oh! my faithful friends!
Ye all—all of you, my poor followers,
Have ſacrific'd your days to ſhare my woes.

Now

Now let me aſk forgiveneſs for the paſt;
Pardon my many negligences!—

LADY DOUGLAS.

Oh!
Thus, on our knees, we crave your bleſſing all.

MARY.

Yes, I will bleſs you with my lateſt breath;
'Tis all I have to give; except, perchance,
Some trifles, which I here bequeath among you.
[*Delivering her Will.*
Beton, accept this ring—take that—And thou!
[*Giving a Ring to* Beton, *and her Phyſician, and her Almoner.*
Theſe tokens may remind you of my love.—
Come hither, all my maids! [*The maids riſe and approach.*] Farewel, ſweet friends.
[Mary *kiſſes each of them.*
We ſoon ſhall meet.—Come, Douglas! let me bind
Thine arm with this my bracelet; that ſo oft
As you behold it, you may think on me.
[*Claſping her in her Arms.*
'Now let me hold thee thus—Nay, do not weep
'That I'm tranſlated from this ſcene of care
'To endleſs joy—Once more farewel!—lead on!
[Mary *makes a Sign for the Proceſſion to go on, and is proceeding, when* Melvin, *an old Man with grey Locks, throws himſelf at her Feet, in Tears.*

'MELVIN.

'Oh, mercy! mercy, Heaven! alas, my Queen!
'That I ſhou'd live to ſuch an age for this,
To ſee this ſight, and carry back this tale!'

MARY.

'Melvin! my faithful ſervant, Melvin, here!
'In my laſt moments—They have kept thee long
'Out of thy Miſtreſs' ſight—thou comeſt in time
'For her poor bleſſing—Good old man, return;
'Commend me to my ſon—tell him I've done
'No prejudice to Scotland's crown—tell him
'My lateſt words were thoſe of Scotland's Queen."
[Melvin *tries to ſpeak, and is unable.*

Poor ſoul, thy griefs have choak'd thy ſpeech! Adieu!
Bear witneſs all, tell it throughout the world,
But chiefly to my family in France,
That I die firmly in their holy faith!
And you, ye Miniſters from England's Queen!
Tell her, ſhe hath my pardon; and relate,
That, with my dying breath, I do beſeech
Her kindneſs to my ſervants; and requeſt
Safe conduct for them into France; that done,
I've nought to aſk, but that my poor remains
May be beſtow'd in Lorrain, or in France,
Where I may hope for pious obſequies;
For here the tombs of my progenitors
Are all profan'd—Remember my requeſts!—
Now lead me on in triumph, till I gain
Immortal joys, and an immortal reign.

FINIS.

EPILOGUE.

Written by the AUTHOR,

And ſpoken by Mrs. SIDDONS.

WERE you not told, before the play began,
Our Author ventur'd on a daring plan?
A tale of woe, a deep hiſtoric Play
Giv'n in an age ſo debonnair and gay,
Was this a place to ſet up a defence,
And talk of injur'd Mary's innocence?—
Of late diſcoveries, drawn from dates and words,
Old rotten parchments, muſty, dull records?
No—all is now for tinſel, ſhow!—this age
Turns a deaf ear—but keenly views the ſtage!
The Tragic Muſe, nay, all the ſiſters nine,
Are now eclips'd—Aladin's lamp doth ſhine!
Exulting o'er their tomb—now *boxers ſpar!*
And beaux, in raptures, envy every ſcar!
Learning and wit were once eſteem'd, and then
The ſtage produced Ben Johnſon—*now*, Big Ben!
Shakeſpeare make room for Humphries!—that's the way
To bring the men of faſhion to the play.
But to our Bard—How ſhall we judge his caſe?
Who ſcorns the unity of time and place.
Critics, what ſay ye?—Muſt he ſue for peace
To wits of modern France or ancient Greece?
The great Voltaire has told us, that a play
Should be within one houſe, and in one day—
But in one evening, how can it be right,
To repreſent the morning, noon, and night?

To

To hail Aurora, ſwear the ſun-beam glows,
While theſe vile lamps ſtill flare beneath my noſe.
And as to place—deception's all in vain—
We've known all night, that this is Drury Lane.
Thus Engliſh Johnſon's ſterling wit and ſenſe
Treats this French rule, as a poor, weak pretence
To cloak their narrow genius—an expedient
To make their fable, like themſelves, obedient.
When action, uniform in every part,
Guides the clear tale directly to the heart,
In vain dramatic pedants may combine
The free-born Muſe, by weak'ning, to refine,
Whene'er ſhe mounts, their damp, cold veil to fling,
Or clip the maſter feather of her wing.
No; let the Tragic Muſe range far and wide,
Bind not in chains the paſſions' faithful guide;
Let the full heart expand, and ſeek relief
From the ſweet luxury of virtuous grief.
May no ſtern critic or falſe ſhame control
This noble weakneſs of each generous ſoul:
For with the tender heart alone you'll find,
The higheſt ſpirit and the firmeſt mind.